DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 242 EC 202 024

AUTHOR Mumford, Thelma
TITLE The Development and Implementation of a Program To Improve the Performance of Underachieving Gifted Students.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 122p.; Ed.D. Individual 2 Report, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Ability Identification; *Academic Achievement; *Academically Gifted; Aptitude; Critical Thinking; *Educational Counseling; Eligibility; Intermediate Grades; *Intervention; Junior High Schools; Language Arts; Mathematics Skills; *Outcomes of Education; Parent Counseling; Prevention; Program Development; School Districts; State Programs; Test Wiseness; *Underachievement
IDENTIFIERS *Atlanta Public Schools GA

ABSTRACT

A program was designed to reduce the academic gap between aptitude and achievement of 150 gifted underachievers in grades 5-8 who had been removed from a Georgia-funded gifted program due to poor achievement test scores and were subsequently enrolled in the Atlanta Public School System's locally funded gifted program. The program also sought to have fewer than 10% of the 1,800 gifted students currently enrolled in the state-funded gifted program be judged as underachievers. The program's three components included: (1) educational intervention in test taking, critical thinking, language arts, and mathematics skills; (2) student counseling; and (3) parent counseling. After intervention, 110 of the 150 students from the locally funded gifted program met the state eligibility achievement criterion and were reenrolled in the state-funded program for the gifted, while only one of the 180 students enrolled in the state-funded program was terminated and placed in the locally funded gifted program. (Author/JDD)

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ED292242

THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF UNDERACHIEVING GIFTED STUDENTS

by
Thelma Mumford*

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
National Ed.D. Program for Educational Leaders

Nova University

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Individual 2 Report
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ABSTRACT

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DATE: April, 1987
CLUSTER: Atlanta III
PRACTICUM: Individual 2

TITLE: The Development and Implementation of a Program to Improve the Performance of Underachieving Gifted Students

The report describes a program to reduce the academic gap between aptitude and achievement of 150 gifted underachievers enrolled in the Atlanta Public School System's locally funded gifted program and to prevent ten percent of the 1,800 gifted students currently enrolled in the state funded gifted program from being judged as underachievers. The 150 underachievers were removed from the state funded gifted program because they were not performing at predicted levels as measured by achievement tests scores. The school system responded by implementing a locally funded gifted program which enrolled those students who were terminated from the state funded gifted program.

The problem had two facets: one involved intervening in the locally funded gifted education program to decrease the number of students previously meeting the mental ability criterion and not meeting the achievement criterion, to allow them to reenter the state funded gifted education program. The second facet involved intervening in the state funded gifted education program to reduce the number of students meeting both criteria when enrolled but failing to meet the achievement criterion over time. The major strategy employed to address the problem was the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program which involved three components: 1) educational intervention in test taking, critical thinking, language arts, and mathematics skills, 2) student counseling, and 3) parent counseling.

The results indicated that after intervention, 110 of the 150 students from the locally funded gifted program met the state eligibility achievement criterion and were reenrolled in the state funded program for the gifted while only one of the 180 students enrolled in the state funded program was terminated and placed in the locally funded gifted program. It is concluded that it is possible to modify the educational program of gifted students in such a way that those students will perform at expected levels on standardized tests.

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Chapter 1

THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The School Setting

Atlanta is the capital of the State of Georgia. Federal government activity is centered in Atlanta, which is the southeastern headquarters for some 70 federal agencies. Atlanta is also a major transportation hub of the southeastern United States.

A major factor in Atlanta's rise to prominence as a national center has been its exceptional and diverse educational facilities. There are over 19 public school systems in the 18 county Metro-Atlanta area with a population which exceeds 2,000,000. Atlanta has 36 degree granting colleges, junior colleges, seminaries and universities. Atlanta also qualifies as a major center of vocational-technical training. Complementing Atlanta's educational facilities is a rich historical background, preserved by the Georgia Department of Archives.

The Target Schools

The Atlanta Public School System offers diverse educational services and extensive opportunities for those with special educational needs in all public and in many private schools. Its general objective is to provide the youth of Atlanta with the knowledge and skills necessary to become functioning citizens; it is one of the largest public educational systems in the nation with

has an enrollment of approximately 68,000 students. The system is composed of 85 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, and 20 secondary schools. The instructional program provides educational opportunities from day care through adult vocational education. Numerous special schools and alternative programs supplement and extend the regular academic program providing maximum educational opportunities for the citizens of Atlanta.

The Atlanta Public School System is decentralized with three separate administrative areas and a central office staff. The Division of Instructional Planning and Development is a central office division with the Program for Exceptional Children as one of its departments. The Program for Exceptional Children has seven coordinator positions. The writer has been the Coordinator of the Program for the Gifted since 1978. It is the writer's job function to develop and implement quality gifted education programs for the entire school system, grades K-12. The particular aspect of the writer's job function that was involved in this practicum is the writer's responsibility to insure that programs developed and implemented for gifted students are broad enough in scope and sequence to meet the diverse needs of the gifted student population.

The Atlanta Public Schools' programs for the gifted are known as Challenge I and Challenge II. The Challenge I Program is funded by the State Department of Education and the Challenge II Program is funded by the school system and implemented in four of the ten middle schools. The gifted programs are referred to as the state funded gifted program (Challenge I) or locally funded gifted program (Challenge II) in this report.

Criteria by which students become eligible for placement in the state funded gifted program include I.Q. and achievement test scores. In the spring of 1985, the Georgia State Department of Education raised the I.Q. and achievement test eligibility requirements for the state funded program for the gifted. As a result, some 515 students in four middle schools in grades five through eight were terminated from the state funded program in June, 1985. Three hundred fifteen students were terminated because they did not meet the new I.Q. requirement; the remaining 200 met the new I.Q. requirement but were not achieving at predicted levels. The Atlanta Public Schools responded by implementing a locally funded gifted program which enrolled the 515 (groups of 315 and 200) terminated students enrolled in the four middle schools.

The Target Schools within a National Context

For more than half a century high, ability children, who do not achieve scholastically at levels commensurate with their mental abilities (underachievers) (Ralph et. al., 1966), have been the focus of considerable concern of educators, nationally (Gallagher, 1982; Laycoch, 1979; Pringle, 1970).

Many gifted students are doing efficient work in school and are performing well beyond youngsters of average intellectual abilities asserts Gallagher (1982). Nevertheless, a small proportion of these gifted students, when achievement is compared to ability, are doing quite poorly. Even though accomplishing less than expected, the student who underachieves may produce a measurable amount of work.

However underachievement is undesirable behavior and, as with any undesirable behavior, may be modified (Dellsie, 1982).

On the other hand authors Ralph, Goldberg, Passow (1966), and Whitmore (1980) argue that underachievement is a national problem for gifted students only because it is recognized as a problem by adults. Also, underachieving students suffer the pangs of knowing they are disappointing teachers and parents. Thus burdened, students learn to assess their abilities in relation to what they have not done instead of what they do or are capable of doing (Bloom, 1977). Similar to the frustration of attempting to ". . . deepen a hole in wet sand", the underachieving student may see each victory squelched by the collapse of peripheral, unmet goals (Bloom, 1977). For example, one student recounts (American Association of Gifted Children, 1978):

> My parents hindered me at times by often expecting too much of me. By being perfectionists, my parents made me feel inadequate and frustrated if I was not consistently performing at my best (p. 49).

According to Whitmore (1980) there is probably nothing more infuriating to an educator than to see a student with great potential fritter it away through a lack of action or apparent lack of caring. The educator sees so many students with limited potential struggle hard to get what the gifted students could do so easily if they would put forth greater effort, that they tend to have little sympathy for gifted "underachievers".

In the early 1960's, researchers, educators, and the nation's political leaders were concerned about accurate early identification of scientific potential and educational development of that

potential. The social context of the newborn Space Age generated a corresponding interest in the psychological factors and research on educational factors contributing to the underachievement of able students. Some of this research approached the question through the examination of characteristics of underachieving gifted individuals without relating those traits to the educational programming and social experiences provided the child at school. Until the early sixties, the area of motivation had barely been examined (Fliegler and Bish, 1959), and although there were numerous studies of underachievement reported, there was little information regarding the factors that contributed to academic success or failure. Some attention had been given to counseling procedures to be used with underachieving high ability students but little other special programming had been proposed or implemented.

As an outgrowth of research pertaining to underachievement, it was recognized that academic accomplishments depend upon complex interrelationships of intelligence, personality, identification with social class values, peer relationships, parental environment, and school milieu. The 1960's provided the most serious investigation into the problem of underachievement that has occurred. Research reported that year produced substantial evidence that early identification of gifted underachievers is very necessary for adequate intervention to occur (Whitmore, 1980).

Gallagher (1982) reported underachievement as one of the most popular research topics, particularly for graduate students, in the mid-sixties. The research design, according to Gallagher, usually

involved comparisons between "underachievers" and "achievers". By 1965, again according to Gallagher, research had well established that underachievers have low self-concepts and have poor overall adjustment patterns.

Certainly, gifted underachievers are clearly different from gifted achievers in their personal characteristics. Gifted underachievers generally seem to be unsure of and lacking in purpose and confidence in themselves. Many educators and educational programs fail to deal effectively with the gifted underachiever because they fail to realize the depth and intensity of the problem and therefore underestimate the resources needed to correct it.

Gough (1955) suggests that the chronic gifted underachiever has an asocial personality and rejects school as part of a total pattern of rejecting the values of society. Gough also reports findings that chronic underachievers scored higher on a scale measuring delinquent antisocial attitudes than did achievers. Thus, it is apparent, given Gough's research that the personal values of the underachiever may be described as antisocial, if not asocial.

Walsh (1956), using play techniques to investigate the self-concepts of elementary school underachieving gifted boys, found that their expressed attitudes were closely allied to those discovered by other investigators. The low-achieving gifted boys felt less accepted by their families, were more constricted in their actions, and generally more negative and defensive. The portrait of their world was that of an unfriendly and unsympathetic place, and this attitude apparently stemmed from their negative attitudes

toward the "family". The children in reaction to the parents' unfriendly attitudes toward them, thus perceived by the child, were hesitant to accept the values of the family or of the society.

Shaw (1961) identified underachieving gifted students in seventy-four schools in thirteen districts of one California county in grades four, seven, and ten. Children who obtained an I.Q. score of 115+ on the California Test of Mental Maturity were identified as academically talented. Those children in this population who had a grade-point average of 2.8 and below, or about a "C" and below, were called underachievers; those with "B" average or above in academic grades were called achievers. A total of over 1,000 achievers and 628 underachievers were examined on various personality tasks. The results indicated that the underachievers appeared different from the achievers in exhibiting a greater negative self-concept and a generally more negative outlook on life.

Bachtold (1969) compared the personality characteristics of achieving and underachieving gifted fifth grade students by use of a child's personality questionnaire. Generally, underachieving gifted girls seemed to lack self-confidence and were more excitable and less self-controlled than the high-achieving girls; high-ability and high-achieving males also tended to show a greater degree of emotional stability, seriousness, and sensitivity than underachieving males. Bachtold further revealed that personality characteristics seem fairly well established by the preadolescent elementary school level and that the program for remediation for these students has to address the personality as well as the academic problems revealed by the students.

In a study by Karnes, McCoy, Zehrbach, Sludey and Wright (1961) of gifted overachievers and underachievers, a total of 223 children in grades two through five in a Midwestern city were found to have I.Q.'s of 120 and above. The top 16 percent and the bottom 16 percent of achievers, in relationship to their ability, were then chosen for the comparison. In terms of family relationships, the attitudes and relationship to the father seemed to play a significant role. In this instance, the fathers of underachieving gifted children showed more hostility and rejection than did the fathers of the gifted overachievers. Similar feelings were not shown by mothers. The study findings also appear to indicate that on measures of fluency, flexibility, and originality, gifted underachieving children were significantly poorer than gifted overachievers. Gifted underachievers also obtained significantly lower ratings in peer relationships. Overall, there is a definite implication in the study report that, when the father is more punitive in his relationship with his gifted children, particularly his sons, there is an increased possibility that the son will show disturbances in the academic areas.

One study indicated that mothers of gifted high achieving boys were lower in authoritarianism than were mothers of low-achieving boys. The combination of a father and mother, both high in rigid authoritarianism and low in acceptance of their youngsters, corrolated highly with a pattern of poor academic performance in the boys. However, the effect of mothers upon girls seems to be just the opposite. That is, girls who are poor achievers seem to have mothers

of low authoritarianism, whereas high-achieving girls seem to have mothers of high dominance (Pierce and Bowman, 1960).

Kanoy (1980), in a study of gifted fourth grade children, examined relationships among academic achievement and the students' locus of control and self-concepts. Based on both I.Q. and achievement test scores, twenty gifted fourth graders from the public school system of Burlington, North Carolina were selected for this study. Of the twenty students, nine were male achievers (MA), three were male underachievers (MUA), eleven were female achievers (FA) and six were female underachievers (FUA). Two questionnaires were administered to each student in the study. The Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire (IAR) was used as a measure of internal-external locus of control (Crandall, Katkovsky, and Crandall, 1965). The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-HCSCS) was given as a measure of self-concept (Piers-Harris, 1969). The data were examined with two factors and single factor analysis of variance. Sex (male and female) and achievement (achievers and underachievers) served as the two independent variables. Each of the total and subscale scores from the IAR and P-HCSCS were used as the dependent variables.

Although no relationship could be established for sex with self-concept and locus of control among the students in this study, the findings indicated that achievers had a higher self-concept than did underachievers on intellectual and school status. On the variable of internal vs. external locus of control, achievers were found to be significantly more internal than were underachievers.

Connell and Davis (1985) examined some independent and joint effects of aptitude (gifted versus normal) and achievement (underachievers versus achievers) on domain-specific assessments of self-esteem processes in upper elementary-aged children. Specifically, four groups were compared: gifted achievers and underachievers, and average achievers and underachievers. The sample of students was drawn from two school districts in a northeast metropolitan area. The 122 subjects included in the final sample were selected from a larger sample of 316 subjects in fourth through sixth grades, ranging from eight to twelve years of age by regressing achievement on aptitude (Thorndike, 1963).

Subjects were administered the Perceived Competence Scale for Children, (Harter, 1982), the Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Orientation in the Classroom Scale (Harter, 1981), and the Multi-dimensional Measure of Children's Perceptions of Control (Connell, in press). A measure of school-related anxiety was used as an additional measure of negative affect in relation to school competence and performance. Comparisons of aptitude and achievement on the self-related constructs indicated that higher aptitude is associated with realistically higher perceptions of competence, greater understanding of what controls success and failure in school, less anxiety concerning school performance, and a more intrinsic motivational orientation in the classroom. Underachievement was associated with realistically lower evaluations of performance, higher internal responsibility for academic outcomes, and lower external perceptions of control over these outcomes.

Thus, underachieving gifted students are of considerable concern. Students in this category experience social and psychological problems that are often related to ways in which they are treated, decisions they make, and other factors. The problem of underachieving gifted students has typically been approached by examining their characteristics and counseling them. Little attention has been paid to the nature of the educational program to which gifted underachieving students are exposed.

Chapter 2

IDENTIFICATION AND EVIDENCE OF PROBLEM

General Problem Statement

During the winter of 1984 the Georgia State Department of Education monitored the Atlanta Public Schools' Program for Exceptional Children. Subsequently, the Department provided the school system with its report which included findings and recommendations. Among the recommendations made and later implemented were the following:

(1) Students enrolled in the program for the gifted must meet all the eligibility criteria as established by the State Department of Education's "new" gifted program rules and regulations. The new regulations differed from previous criteria in that (a) all students in the program for the gifted were required to score a minimum of 128 (an increase from the previous eligibility criteria of 126), on a test of mental ability and (b) students were required to score in the 90th percentile on the reading and mathematics sub-tests of a standardized achievement test, rather than the previous 90th percentile total composite score.

(2) Students admitted into the gifted education program, under the previous criteria, were also required to meet the new criteria by the end of the 1984-85 school year (June, 1985).

The implementation of the State Department of Education's "new" eligibility criteria created widespread concern among parents of affected gifted students. These parents on various occasions had previously taken their concerns to the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, and the writer, demanding that their children be given the opportunity to continue in the State funded Program for the Gifted. By means of telephone calls, letters, and meetings, they had continually requested and insisted that the local school system initiate local programs for the gifted. In response to their concern, in June 1985, the Atlanta Public Schools' Board of Education created a locally funded gifted program in four middle schools and allocated funds to hire six teachers of the gifted from its General Fund Budget for a period, not to exceed three years beginning with the 1985-86 school year. The purpose of the locally funded gifted program was to appease some parents of the gifted by providing a three year locally funded program of gifted education services to the 515 gifted students in grades five through eight who had been removed from the state funded program because they did not meet the mental ability and/or achievement criterion.

As previously indicated, two hundred of the 515 students enrolled in grades five through eight and terminated from the state program met the mental ability criterion but did not meet the achievement criterion. At the end of the 1985-86 school year (June 1986, the end of the first year of the locally funded program), only six of these 200 students (three percent) met the new state achievement eligibility requirement and returned to the state funded program. This presented an incipient problem because the locally funded program

was funded for only three years and without planned program intervention it was conceivable that subsequent to the two remaining years of the locally funded program, students labeled gifted under the previous state regulations would not receive appropriate educational services. Thus, the problem had two facets; one involved intervening in the locally funded gifted education program designed to increase the number of students previously meeting the mental ability criterion and not meeting the achievement criterion, hoping to allow them to reenter the state funded gifted education program. The second facet involved intervening in the state funded gifted education program to reduce the number of students who met both criteria when enrolled but failed to meet the achievement criterion over time.

To summarize, the total number of students enrolled in the locally funded gifted program and housed in the four middle schools was 509 (six students had previously met the new state achievement eligibility requirement). Of that number, 194 students were in the locally funded gifted program because they failed to meet the state achievement eligibility criterion. Three hundred-eighty of the system's 1,800 students enrolled in the state funded gifted education program attended those four middle schools. Future reference to students enrolled in the state funded gifted education program in this report is to those 380 students.

Detailed Documentation

According to Marion Leibowitz (1984), many gifted students may be underachieving simply because they have not been recognized as having outstanding potential and have not been provided appropriate programs.

Sidney Marland, Secretary of Education in 1972, estimated that as many as 50 percent of the nations gifted students go unidentified.

As previously reported, only six of 200 (three percent) under-achieving gifted students met the state achievement criterion and were readmitted to the state funded program. If the remaining 194 students are readmitted at that rate, only 18 (or 9%) of those students will be readmitted by the end of the three year locally funded gifted education program.

According to a federal definition of giftedness which was proposed by Sidney P. Marland, former U.S. Commissioner of Education, a minimum of three to five percent of the Atlanta Public Schools' population is gifted (Marland, 1971). Since the Atlanta Public School System enrolled 66,500 students in the 1984-85 school year, it would be expected by Marland's definition that between 1,995 and 3,325 of its students would be gifted. The State Department of Education estimates, that three percent (State Gifted Guidelines) of Atlanta Public Schools students are gifted. Using the lower of the two estimates 1,995 Atlanta Public Schools students should have been served in the state funded gifted program in school year 1984-85. The fact that 2,005 Atlanta Public Schools students were enrolled in the state funded gifted program during school year 1984-85 compares favorably with the three percent estimate. The Atlanta Public Schools enrolled 68,000 students in school year 1986-87. The three percent estimate would indicate that 2,040 would be enrolled in the state

funded gifted education program. However, only 1,800 students were so enrolled. This indicates a discrepancy of 12 percent (240 students) between the actual and expected number of gifted students served by the state funded gifted education program.

This discrepancy was explained, to some extent, by the fact that at the end of school year 1984-85, 515 students had been removed from the state funded gifted education program. The removal of those students reduced the percentage of students being served by the state funded gifted education program from 3 percent to 2.2 percent of the enrollment. Two hundred of the 515 removed students were removed because while they met the mental abilities criterion, they were not achieving at expected levels. If the remaining 194 underachieving gifted students (the reader will remember that six students were readmitted to the state funded program during school year 1985-86) can be helped to raise their achievement scores to expected levels and be reenrolled in the state funded gifted education program, close to three percent of the Atlanta Public School enrollment would be served by that program. The discrepancy between the number of students expected and actually served by the program would, therefore, approach zero.

Prior Activity In Problem Area

The need to provide services to the underachieving gifted students in the Atlanta Public Schools System was not new. It had been the concern of an Area Superintendent, regular education teachers, and parents that these students be stimulated and challenged beyond what was being provided in their regular education classes.

The needs of these students in the past have been primarily the responsibility of the regular education program. This often took the form of requiring underachieving gifted students to do more of the same types of activities required of regular students, going to the library, working on computers, and/or engaging in independent learning activities. Parents and classroom teachers would bring the need for assistance to the attention of the principal and the principal would call the writer for assistance. Because of the state of Georgia Gifted Education rules and regulations, the only assistance the writer had been able to provide has been inservice training in the form of faculty meeting presentations to discuss strategies for working with underachieving gifted students in the regular education setting. The inservice training sessions with the faculties were helpful but did not solve the problem. There was not a systemwide program for meeting the needs of underachieving gifted students.

The political constraints to providing a systemwide program for underachieving gifted students included budgetary limitations, a lack of Superintendent and Board of Education approval, and the concept of having to provide equal programs for other competing exceptionalities (i.e. students with learning problems who do not meet the state eligibility for the Learning Disabilities Program). Ultimately, parental support and interest convinced the Board of Education that there was a need to provide local funds (although for only three years) to have a program in four middle schools for those gifted students who were removed from the state funded gifted program.

Probable Causes

A major factor influencing the low number of underachieving gifted students returning to the state funded gifted program after one year of local funded program operation is the fact that the Board of Education reacted to political pressure from highly verbal and visible parents of students previously labeled gifted without considering instructional program planning. A second factor was that the state and locally funded programs did not differ from each other in design or teaching staff and, therefore, deficiencies in the state funded program were embedded in the locally funded program. This meant among other things, that the curriculum in the locally funded program had not been differentiated to meet the unique needs of underachieving gifted students.

Chapter 3

DEFINING A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF UNDERACHIEVING GIFTED STUDENTS

It is obvious from materials discussed in Chapters One and Two that planned interventions were needed in both the locally funded and state funded gifted program. Accordingly, two terminal objectives were indicated.

Terminal Objective 1

During the period September 2, 1986 through March 2, 1987, underachieving gifted students enrolled in the locally funded gifted program on September 2, 1986 and their parents will participate in the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program. As a result of participation in this program 50 percent of the underachieving gifted students currently enrolled in the locally funded gifted program in the participating schools will achieve at expected levels and be readmitted into the state funded program on March 2, 1987. Evidence that this has occurred will take the form of the Locally Funded Gifted Tracking Forms which will be submitted to the writer on March 16, 1987.

Terminal Objective 2

During the period September 2, 1986 through March 2, 1987, high risk gifted students enrolled in the state funded gifted program will participate in the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program.

As a result of being exposed to this program, less than ten percent of the gifted students enrolled in the state funded program housed in the participating schools for the gifted will be terminated from the state program and placed in the locally funded gifted program. Evidence that this has occurred will take the form of the Locally Funded Gifted Program Tracking Form which will be submitted on March 16, 1987.

Explanation. The treatment period September 2, 1986 through March 2, 1987 was selected because school began on September 2 and because the school system's Exceptional Children's Program Annual Reviews were begun in March. It was also the case that a Locally Funded Gifted Program Tracking Form (see Appendix A: 57) was used to periodically report the status of each student enrolled in the locally funded program. The form lists the names of students currently enrolled in the locally funded program, students who have returned to the state funded program and the students who have moved to another school. The form is submitted on or about December 15, March 16 and June 15.

The treatment, the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program, consisted of three components. A first component, student counseling, involved six hours of group counseling by a trained counselor. A second component, basic skills improvement, involved skill building in the areas of language arts, mathematics, critical thinking and test taking. A third component, parent counseling, involved four hours of group counseling by a counselor.

With respect to terminal objective 1, it was anticipated that one-half of the students currently enrolled in the locally funded gifted program in the participating school would return to the state funded gifted program during year two of the locally funded program. Prior to intervention, the program had operated one year and only six students enrolled in the four schools had been reenrolled in the state funded gifted education program. Therefore, if all eligible gifted students were to be reenrolled in the state funded gifted education program before the locally funded gifted program ended, at least 97 students had to be reenrolled in the state funded gifted program in each of the two remaining locally funded gifted education program years.

Because of the loss of 44 students in the locally funded gifted program population (see Major Elements In Implementation Design, p. 36) the "97 student" expectation was reduced to 75 students (one-half of the remaining 150 students).

With respect to terminal objective 2, locally Funded Gifted Education Tracking Forms were used to determine the extent to which student from the state funded program were admitted to the locally funded program.

The "less than ten percent" proportion of the target group was arrived at because ten percent of the students were terminated from the state funded program at the end of school year 1984-85. It was believed that a successful intervention would result in fewer than ten percent of the students enrolled in the state funded gifted program being terminated.

Chapter 4

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF UNDERACHIEVING GIFTED STUDENTS

Research Findings

The writer summarized characteristics of underachieving gifted students as discussed in the literature in Chapter 1. In this section of Chapter 4, the writer first discusses specific strategies and findings reported by others. This discussion is followed by an assessment of strategies in the context of the practicum situation.

The literature recommended counseling for gifted underachievers and advocated two specific types of counseling each with some degree of parent involvement. Researchers frequently have urged early identification and intervention in elementary schools because of the difficulty of obtaining significant results with gifted underachievers in the adolescent years. Zilli's (1971) review of research indicates that group counseling seems to be the most effective treatment for gifted underachievers because the students benefited from the opportunity to exchange ideas with peer underachievers.

Baymur and Patterson (1960) tried to evaluate three methods of helping underachieving gifted high school students. One group of gifted underachievers consisted of children who were individually counseled; a second group received group counseling; and a third group

was given a one-session motivational talk. The gifted underachievers were told, in the one-session talk, that they had high ability and that they should try to work up to their expectations. A fourth group was the control group that received no counseling at all. The results of the counseling were not clearly positive. There was a tendency for the counseled students to have a higher grade point average than the noncounseled students, but there were only limited changes in their self-concepts stemming from the short term counseling.

Proff and Southard (1960) counseled four groups of underachieving gifted ninth graders. The sessions were based upon the premise that, if a student experiences peer acceptance the student will be better able to accept other persons in turn, and eventually experience more self-acceptance. After a student begins to experience more self-acceptance, then, and only then, can the student experience self-acceptance of giftedness and make plans for the full use of associated potentialities. It took skillful counseling and a good deal of time to achieve even the modest results obtained in the experiment. Some improvements in self-concept and achievement were attained in individual cases.

Shaw (1960) initiated a family counseling technique for gifted underachievers and their parents. The basis for this program was the hypothesis that the basic problem of the gifted underachiever is a breakdown of communication between himself and his parents, causing the child to feel unworthy and unaccepted. It was expected that reactions to these feelings would be resentment and hostility, which would tend to create the personality and attitudinal frameworks that result in underachievement. Shaw used twelve groups of twelve

parents. Eight of the groups came from a tenth grade and four from a seventh grade population of students . They underwent four therapeutic sessions of an hour and half each, with both a mother and a father present during the sessions. The program was successful enough to warrant continuation for another year. An advantage of the procedure used was that the students generally felt it an honor to be considered an equal with adults in discussing problems. The respect given the students by the counselor was an important part of the remedial practice.

Shouksmith and Taylor (1964) obtained strikingly positive results in a combined program for preadolescent underachievers and their parents. In less than a year's time, eight of the twelve members of the counseled groups improved to the point where they could no longer be identified as underachievers.

Goldberg (1960) has reported on a program of research directed through the Talented Youth Project at Teachers College. In one experiment, 35 students were identified who had measured I.Q. scores above 125 and who had a relatively low grade point average. Those students were assigned to a homeroom teacher who was also their social studies teacher. The teacher was warm, accepting and flexible in his demands on the students. The students seemed to respond by obtaining slightly better grades than did their control sample colleagues in the regular program. During the following year, the same group was placed with a social studies teacher, who, while highly skillful in her own area, had rather rigid and high standards that she expected all students to meet. This group of students rebelled against this type

of teaching and at the end of the year, were no further ahead, and in some cases less far ahead, than were the control subjects. Another group of students who were in the top ten percent of their class in ability and who had failed first year algebra were placed in a special geometry class with a master teacher. These students did seem to respond to the instructor and to show improvements in geometry, but at the expense of some of their other subjects. It was concluded that the greatest need for the underachievers was to identify with a teacher and to have ample opportunity for help with both personal and academic problems.

Karn, McCoy, Zehrbach, Wollersheim, and Clarizio (1961) identified gifted underachieving children at the elementary school level in Champaign, Illinois. These children were divided into two groups. Members of one group were placed in classes for gifted children that had been homogeneously grouped. No more than 20 percent of any class of gifted children was composed of underachievers. Members of the second group were placed in the regular educational setting, a standard heterogeneous grouping. Both groups were observed over a two-year period of time. At the end of that period, the gifted children in the homogeneously grouped classes showed significant improvement--both in intellectual fluency and in their perceived parent attitudes. This study revealed that it is possible to modify the attitudes of underachieving gifted students, not by attacking them directly, but rather through modification of the educational environment.

Marion (1973) maintained that if a good home-school relationship were to develop, parents needed to feel welcome at their children's schools and to have information about the schools and learning activities. Parents, thus, were to have a place within each school to call their own, a space which would be inviting and informative.

The Cupertino Union School District (Cupertino, California, 1969) established a Student Centered Learning Program for underachieving gifted students. The Cupertino Program for highly gifted underachievers established self-contained classes for students who evidenced the need for an intensive program of social and emotional rehabilitation as well as academic remediation. The program was based upon the belief that enrolling underachieving gifted students, who had been described as severely dysfunctional in regular or gifted education classes, together with full-time intensive educational intervention during the elementary years was the most promising method of reversing early patterns of chronic and severe underachievement. The program was intended to be a temporary placement with students remaining in the underachieving gifted class only until they were placed in a cluster gifted class. It was expected that the average period of enrollment in the underachieving gifted program would be one year in the primary grades and two years in the intermediate grades. The predictions were accurate with definitive evidence that the later the intervention occurred, the longer the student would need special intensive programming.

The only documentation of a similar effort was cited briefly in Andersen's (1961) account of the 1959 Conference on Research on

Academically Talented Students. The report noted that the San Diego School System had successfully enrolled "gifted but emotionally disturbed" children in the elementary grades. It was found that the discovery of peer friendships seemed to help change the attitudes and behaviors of the underachievers. However, the system was found less successful at the high school level.

Strategies found appear to fall into five broad categories: (1) early identification and intervention, (2) counseling, (3) parental involvement, (4) teacher behavior, and (5) grouping for instruction. These findings are summarized below.

With respect to early identification and intervention Whitmore (1969) found that the earlier the underachieving gifted student is identified, the less time one must intervene in the student's behavior. Zilli (1971) found that an atmosphere of early intellectual stimulation and challenge will reduce the need for an intensive program for underachieving gifted students during adolescence.

Five types of counseling were discussed in the literature: group counseling; individual counseling; short term counseling; family (joint) counseling; and, parental counseling. With respect to group counseling, Zilli (1971) reported that underachieving gifted students seemed to benefit from the opportunity to exchange ideas with peer achievers. Individual counseling within the context of the classroom has promise for effective intervention especially if the leading causes of the child's underachievement (such as negative effects of teacher-pupil interaction, peer relationships, or curriculum and instruction) reside in the classroom (Jackson, et. al., 1975).

Findings associated with short term counseling are in conflict. Baymur and Patterson (1960) found that short term counseling resulted in higher grade point averages and limited changes in self-concept. Proff and Southard (1960) associated short term counseling with improvements in self-concept and achievement in individual cases.

Family counseling was found by Shouksmith and Taylor (1964) to result in improvement to the point where (in less than a year) underachieving gifted students would no longer be identified as such. Family counseling can be an important part of remedial practice with underachieving gifted students because both can learn from listening to each other, which makes the likelihood of learning greater (Shaw, 1960).

Some inclusion of parents in the counseling program holds the greatest promise of providing successful intervention with underachieving gifted students, according to Jackson (1975). Parents and students realized the value of having the former in the counseling program. It is reasonable to expect counseling to bring about some changes in behavior and attitudes where there are some emotional conflicts and unhealthy social interactions among parents and the underachieving gifted student. The counseling program was found to be most effective when it included parents with whom more constructive relationship may be developed (Perkins and Wicas, 1971).

Parental involvement in separate (parents only) counseling sessions hold promise of providing success in bringing about positive changes in the behavior and attitudes of the parents toward their underachieving gifted children (Perkins and Wicas, 1971). Shaw (1960)

concludes that while lecturing to parents fails to help, counseling them to set a climate of listening to their children's concerns increases the likelihood of change in child behavior.

Teacher type findings appear to be mixed. It would appear that it is important for the underachieving gifted student to identify with a teacher and to have ample opportunity for help with both personal and academic problems (Goldberg, 1960).

The manner in which students are grouped may signal the possibility for modifying the attitudes of underachieving gifted students by altering the educational environment (Karnes, et. al., 1961). It may also signal the positive impact that peer friendship may have on the attitudes and behavior of underachieving gifted students (Anderson, 1961).

It should be pointed out that an important side effect of parental involvement strategies may be the development of parental resistance to further involvement in the schools. This may result from the manner in which parents are initially involved in the schools. For example, parents may be given menial jobs to perform in the guise of parental involvement (Filipczak, 1977).

There seems to be agreement in the literature that providing counseling services for underachieving gifted students is indicated. There is also some support for counseling parents with and independent of their children. The Cupertino report provides support for grouping underachieving gifted students together and for early intervention.

The extent to which it is probable that one or more of the 5 previously discussed broad strategies may be successfully implemented

given the nature of the problem setting is discussed below. Particular attention is paid to the distribution of risk, the politics of allocating scarce resources, and personnel.

Analysis of the Problem Setting

Some pertinent elements bearing on strategy selection are discussed in this section. The state funded gifted program funds gifted students in grades kindergarten through twelve. However, the locally funded gifted program includes students in grades five through eight only. No gifted students below grade four is enrolled in the locally funded gifted program, because students are assessed for gifted program placement in three year cycles. Therefore, no student would typically be terminated from the state funded gifted program prior to grade four. Students in grades nine through twelve were not included in the locally funded gifted program. It was the feeling of the Board of Education that the Magnet School Programs offered in the high schools were appropriate educational alternatives and a locally funded gifted program in those grades was not warranted.

The fact that the locally funded gifted education program resulted from political pressure (and is therefore a political creature) has been discussed in Chapter 1. It has also been indicated that the locally funded gifted education program was given a tenure of three years. Because only two of those three years remained, interventions such as discussed in this report had to be made in a timely manner.

Other elements that should be mentioned include the fact that the Locally Funded Tracking Form is submitted on or about December 15, March 15 and June 15. These timelines had a structuring effect on the strategy. An equally important element stems from the fact that teachers that provided services in the locally funded program formerly provided services to gifted students in the state funded program. Therefore, the writer was acquainted with each teacher in the locally funded and in the state funded gifted education programs.

Most Promising Strategies

Cited research findings led the author to conclude that small group counseling of underachievers, early intervention, and inclusion of the parents in the counseling program or parent involvement in separate counseling sessions held the greatest promise of providing successful intervention (Jackson et. al., 1975; Mink, 1964; Ohlsen, 1964; Perkins and Wicas, 1971; Shouksmith and Taylor, 1964).

A promising strategy for effective intervention was the provision of group counseling within the context of the classroom for the underachieving students. This was especially true if there were principal causes of the child's underachievement that resided in the classroom, for example, negative effects of teacher-pupil interaction, peer relationships, curriculum or instruction. It was felt to be more productive to view the intervention process with underachieving gifted students as educational rather than clinical or psychiatric.

The Cupertino School District's program for highly gifted underachievers seemed promising because it provided five reasons for

grouping gifted underachievers to form a special class of sixteen to twenty-one students. The reasons were based on direct study of the developing characteristics of gifted underachievers placed in regular or gifted classes and on the research that suggested the psychological and educational needs of gifted underachievers. This approach incorporated teacher aides, resource teacher assistance, peer tutoring, and efficient classroom organization for individualized instruction in the basic skills. The reasons for grouping together the underachievers are directly related to the central need to revise self-concepts and to enhance self-esteem. The reasons stated as needs of the underachieving gifted students follow.

1. To decrease self-degrading invidious comparisons with high achievers.
2. To develop acceptance of self through acceptance of others with similar problems.
3. To enjoy rewarding intellectual stimulation and a curriculum centered on their strengths and areas of past success.
4. To acquire a sense of "genuine success".
5. To develop social skills and potential for leadership.

These five reasons were the bases for establishing the special underachieving gifted program and may represent the key reasons the program was successuful in reversing early patterns of underachievement in gifted students.

The Selected Strategy

The selected strategy for this practicum is framed by a combination of two approaches from the literature: (1) group

counseling of underachieving gifted students and their parents and (2) the Cupertino School District's Program for highly gifted underachievers. The educational intervention (Appendix B: 87) was designed to address the basic needs of the underachieving gifted student that, if met, would eliminate the need for the coping or compensatory behavior that had been interfering with achievement and the actualization of academic potential. The combined strategy is referred to in this practicum report as the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program. It was expected that through this program each underachiever would develop more realistic perceptions of self, school, and life and that early self-destructive patterns would be reversed and achievement behavior established.

The major purposes of the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program were:

1. To reduce the academic gap between aptitude and achievement. Since the overall purpose of the practicum was to prepare the gifted underachievers to participate successfully in the state funded gifted program, a fundamental goal was to elevate their academic achievement to state eligibility. The method of attaining that goal was through the diagnosis of academic deficits and learning problems, and the prescription of appropriate instruction to remediate the weaknesses (skill building in language arts, mathematics, critical thinking and test taking).
2. To prevent gifted students enrolled in the state funded gifted program from being judged as underachievers. A

fundamental goal was to prevent their academic achievement from falling below the state criterion. The method of attaining that goal was through the diagnosis of academic deficits and learning problems and the prescription of appropriate instruction to remediate the weaknesses (skill building in language arts, mathematics, critical thinking and test taking).

3. To increase the emotional adjustment and maturity of the students currently enrolled in both the locally and state funded gifted programs. This was regarded as equivalent to the improvement of each underachiever's self-concept and self-esteem. The development of realistic and healthy self-perceptions was central to the process. Efforts to achieve this were made by a counselor who focused on helping students to discover ways of coping with frustration, anger, and other powerful emotions that could be destructive to their social relations or self-image. Finding positive ways to vent or redirect negative feelings was considered a prerequisite to social and academic growth.
4. To change the behavior pattern of the child. Whether the underachieving gifted student was withdrawn or aggressive, a primary strategy was to assist parents with techniques for modifying their responses so there could be a greater probability of social and academic success. The techniques involved helping students adjust to the demands of a group situation so that they could behave appropriately

without feeling that their individuality or basic needs were denied. These related strategies were: 1) guiding the child in developing more constructive ways of responding to social and academic pressures and 2) helping the child develop self-governing behavior within a group context.

Chapter 5

ACTIVITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Major Elements in Implementation Design

With respect to terminal objective one (reducing the academic gap between aptitude and achievement), there were seven key elements: (1) scheduling meetings with participating principals and teachers to explain the project; (2) recruiting a counselor to conduct the parent group counseling sessions; (3) recruiting a counselor to conduct the student group counseling sessions; (4) arranging sites and times for group counseling sessions; (5) consulting with selected subject coordinators regarding appropriate skill building materials; (6) inservice training for locally funded teachers of the gifted on the educational components teaching strategies, methods, materials, and testing; and, (7) assuring that each participating underachieving gifted student was reevaluated at the termination of the practicum.

Six key elements were associated with terminal objective two (preventing the gifted student from being judged as underachievers): (1) scheduling meetings with participating principals and teachers to explain the project; (2) recruiting a counselor to conduct the parent group counseling sessions; (3) recruiting a counselor to conduct the student group counseling sessions; (4) arranging sites and times for group counseling sessions; (5) consulting with selected subject coordinators regarding appropriate skill building materials; and, (6) conducting inservice training for state funded teachers of the

gifted regarding the educational components, teaching techniques, strategies, materials and testing.

The writer was required to modify both objectives early in the implementation period. Modifications were required because the principal of one of the four middle schools in which the locally funded gifted program was implemented elected not to permit his school to participate in the writer's practicum research. The principal made this decision because the principal of one of his feeder schools passed away. It was his judgement that students received from the feeder school at issue would be emotionally affected by the loss of their former principal. He, therefore, concluded that inclusion of these students in the writer's population would significantly change the nature of the problems addressed by the counselors in the Student Centered Counseling Program. This being the case, the number of students in the locally funded gifted population was reduced from 194 to 150 and the number of students in the state funded population was reduced from 380 to 180. The three schools in which the practicum was implemented are referred to as participating schools in this report.

Implementation Timeline

The major steps in the practicum and their order of execution are described in the following implementation plan.

Month	Activity
1. September	
First Week	Consulted with Subject Area Coordinators regarding appropriateness of

educational skill building materials. The writer held a meeting with the Coordinators of Language Arts, Mathematics, and Research and Evaluation to introduce them to the practicum project and to have them review the curriculum materials which were selected by the writer for their appropriateness. The Coordinators reviewed the materials which included: 1) Thinker Task: The Critical Thinking Activity Series; 2) Challenge U: The English College; 3) Challenge U: The Mathematics College; and, 4) The Scope Visual 25 Series for Improving Test Scores. The Coordinators agreed that the materials reviewed were appropriate for use with the gifted students in the practicum. The Coordinators did not feel that additional curriculum was needed in those content areas reviewed.

The Coordinators were interested in the practicum results. They requested that the writer keep them informed of the progress of the project as well as the results of the practicum with specific feedback on the educational intervention. The writer agreed and thanked them for their assistance.

The writer oriented the principals and teachers of the gifted to the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program. The writer met with the four principals at the Instructional Services Center after their scheduled Middle School Principals' Meeting to introduce them to the practicum project and to seek their approval for using their schools in the practicum. The principals were excited about the practicum and very willing to participate. The next day the writer met with the teachers of the gifted at each participating school to explain the practicum. The writer informed the teachers that appropriate inservice training would be provided prior to the implementation of the practicum. The teachers seemed pleased that a planned program would be provided for the students.

Second Week

The writer recruited counselors to conduct parent training sessions and student group counseling sessions. The writer relied on recruiting counselors who had developed good personal as well as professional working relationships. The writer understood that the practicum project

did not allocate resources to hire personnel for the project. Therefore, the personnel selected for this practicum would have to agree to do this assignment in addition to regularly scheduled duties. The writer also needed counselors who were warm, humane, and friendly, with the interest of the "child" being central.

The writer recruited a counselor to work with the students who in addition to the above mentioned qualities, had the personality to bring out the true concerns of the student while making them feel relaxed. The student counselor agreed to participate in the project based on a sincere interest in gifted students and a professional friendship with the writer. The writer and the student counselor mutually developed the student counseling schedule to be used in the practicum.

The writer recruited a psychologist who is also a trained counselor to conduct the parent counseling sessions. The parent counselor had experience working with the writer during previous summers conducting workshops for parents of the gifted as part

of a summer program for gifted students. The parent counselor agreed to work on the project and developed a schedule for the parent counseling sessions. The writer accepted the schedule and agreed to provide all of the necessary publicity for the workshops and to secure clearance for the use of the school buildings from the principals.

Third Week

The writer provided inservice training for locally and state funded teachers of the gifted regarding the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program.

The inservice training was conducted by the writer at the Instructional Services Center. The purpose of the inservice training was to review the objectives of the practicum and to instruct the teachers on the appropriate utilization of the skill building component of the practicum. The teachers were instructed as to their support roles during the student and parent counseling sessions. The teachers were also introduced to the Student Tracking Forms which would be completed periodically during the practicum.

The teachers were excited about the educational materials used during the practicum project. They expressed insecurity about being perceived as "bad teachers" if the gifted students failed to make adequate gains this school year. The gifted teachers felt that principals were expecting them to make great gains with the students this school year as a result of the practicum experience. Anything short of those expectations may reflect adversely on their teacher evaluations that are completed by the principal at the end of the school year. The writer agreed to speak with each principal in an effort to alter the perception that this practicum "will" ensure success. The writer also agreed to ask the principals not to use the "success or failure" of this practicum as an evaluative measure of teacher effectiveness.

Fourth Week

The writer met with selected principals regarding the use of their schools for the group counseling sessions (parents and students). The writer met with each of the four participating principals to inform them of the schedules for parent counseling

sessions and student counseling sessions. The writer also requested permission to conduct the appropriate meetings in their schools. Each principal pledged complete cooperation.

The writer discussed the educational component of the practicum with the principals, including its implementation date. The writer stated that the teachers of the gifted had received adequate training in the use of the materials. The principal as well as the writer were surprised that the teachers felt a level of stress associated with the practicum and it was unanimously agreed that the writer and principals would work to make the teachers feel more relaxed.

The educational skill building components were initiated by the teacher of the gifted.

2. October

First Week

Counselors began initial group counseling sessions with gifted students enrolled in administrative Area I school (School A).

The student counselor met with the state funded and locally funded students in

one large group counseling session. The counselor was pleased that the students were so willing to express themselves in an open forum. The session lasted beyond the allotted time because both the counselor and the students were deeply involved in the discussion. The counselor was sure that the counseling session was needed and looked forward to future meetings with the group. A composite summary of the counseling sessions appear in Appendix C.

The parent counselor met with the parents in Administrative Area I school (School A). The letter of invitation was written by the writer and mailed to each participating parent of students in the practicum. The parent counselor was disappointed with the overall low attendance but felt that those parents who did attend had concerns about raising gifted students that needed addressing. A composite summary of the parent counseling sessions are in Appendix C.

Second Week

Counselor conducted initial group counseling seminar with gifted students enrolled in Administrative Area II school (School B). The student counselor met with gifted students in both the locally funded and state funded programs in the library of the school. The interaction was very positive and the dialogue was healthy, according to the student counselor.

The counselor conducted first group parent counseling session with parents in Administrative Area III (School C). The parent counselor met with the parents in the library of the school. The school provided light refreshments and the parent turn out was adequate according to the parent counselor. The counselor felt that the concerns of the parents at this session focused on "Who is in Charge--The Parent or The Child"? The discussion was lively and it appeared to be a trend that the gifted students were to some degree controlling their parents. The counselor suggested that the parent must be the boss and provide the leadership and set guidelines if discipline was to prevail in the home. The

counselor informed the parents of the next scheduled meeting and asked them to encourage more parents to attend the next session.

Third Week

Counselor conducted first group counseling session with gifted students enrolled in Administrative Area III school (School C). The student counselor found the students open and willing to discuss their concerns regarding the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the education they were receiving in their school. The counselor was able to discuss with the students what responsibility they share regarding what happens in their lives. The focus of the discussion was that for every action they should expect a reaction. Only the responsible student can determine if the action and/or reaction will be positive or negative.

3. November

First Week

The writer met with teachers of the gifted in Administrative Area I school (School A) to discuss the progress of the program. The writer went to school A to meet with the participating teachers of the

gifted to see if they were having any problems with implementing the practicum as it was originally proposed. The teachers discussed the curriculum materials used for educational intervention and were pleased with the student's responses to the materials. The teachers felt that adequate progress was taking place in the practicum.

Second Week

The writer met with teachers of the gifted in Administrative Area II school (School B) to discuss the progress of the program and make necessary modifications. The writer discussed the perceptions of practicums' progress with the teachers of the gifted at school B. The teachers felt that the students were enjoying the educational materials, especially the mathematics and language arts materials. The teachers also stated that they enjoyed having the counseling sessions as a component of the program and would like to see counseling become a standing part of the program for the gifted. The only modification suggested was to have more counseling sessions with the students.

The writer met with the student counselor to discuss the results of the first group counseling session with the students at school B. According to the student counselor the students were articulate and expressed their concerns about the school system and school B in particular. The students felt that teachers often penalized them because they were bright and did't always challenge them. They also felt they were not accepted by peers and teachers because they were intellectually smarter than most students. Some students stated that because they were often not accepted, they deliberately did not do their best on tests and daily classroom activities so that they could become a "part of the gang". The counselor stated again that the practicum was an exciting project and was surfacing some interesting information and feelings from the students.

Third Week

The writer met with teachers of the gifted in Administrative Area III school (School C) to discuss the progress of the program and to make the necessary modifications. The teachers in school C

were excited about the instructional materials used in educational intervention and would like additional materials of the same quality. The teachers felt that those materials motivated most of the students to perform well. The students enjoyed the counseling sessions with the student counselor and felt that this was the first time anyone has asked their opinion regarding how they felt about educational problems and listened to their suggestions for solutions, according to the teachers.

4. December

First Week

The writer disseminated Locally Funded Gifted Forms to appropriate personnel for the December reporting period. The form was introduced at the initial inservice training workshop for teachers of the gifted. A cover letter with directions for completing the form was included.

Second Week

The writer met with the counselor to discuss the progress of the group parent counseling sessions. The parent counselor expressed disappointment with the low number of parents who were in attendance at the meetings. However, the counselor was

pleased with the concerns expressed by those parents who took time from their schedules to attend the meetings. The counselor suggested we should consider having future meetings in the evening rather than the afternoon.

Third Week — The writer reviewed and recorded data collected from the Locally Funded Gifted Program Forms. The writer communicated with the Director of the Program for Exceptional Children on the progress of the practicum. The Director of the Program for Exceptional Children seemed pleased that the project was going well, and asked if additional assistance was needed. The writer stated that financial assistance will be required to secure with testing materials later in the assessment phase of the practicum. The Director promised to assist with the purchasing of testing materials.

5. January

Second Week — Counselor conducted second group counseling session with gifted students enrolled in Administrative Area I school (School A). Some of the students prepared

questions in advance and mailed them to the student counselor prior to the counseling session. The students decided to mail questions which they felt were too sensitive to address from the floor. The counselor stated that he was able to categorize the questions. The student counselor altered the usual counseling routine by beginning the counseling session addressing the written questions (the first 15 minutes). This meeting was also different because the assistant principal who was not invited to attend the counseling session sat in approximately 20 minutes. The student counselor felt that the presence of the assistant principal ("authority figure") could have altered the freedom of expression by the students. However, this was not the case. The assistant principal was impressed with the concerns of the students and requested that someone make a list of the student concerns so that they could be presented to the Advisory Board of the school for corrective action.

Third Week

Counselor conducted second group counseling session with gifted students

enrolled in Administrative Area II school (School B). The counseling session went well. The students were able to formulate a plan-of-action for taking control of their own actions. The students are more mature in discussing the issue of being responsible for what happens to them, according to the student counselor.

Fourth Week

Counselor conducted second group counseling session with gifted students enrolled in Administrative Area III school (School C). The student counselor called the teachers of the gifted at school C prior to the final counseling session to request that the students write questions they may not feel comfortable discussing from the floor and mail them to the student counselor prior to the group counseling session. The counselor made this request based on the positive results of this action taken by school A. The students responded by submitting a variety of questions which ranged from questions on drugs to teenage sexual activity. The student counselor used the first 15 minutes again to discuss the written questions and was masterful at relating the questions that were submitted

to the issue related to the practicum. The counselor was able to use interpersonal skills to make the students feel good about themselves and their potential skills and abilities.

6. February

First Week — These counselor conducted the final group counseling session with parents of gifted students in administrative Areas I and II (Schools A and B). The counselor was pleased to see more parents in attendance at this meeting. The counselor was satisfied that the parents present were in need of assistance and the parent-to-parent interactions during the counseling sessions were invaluable. This interaction helped the parents to see that there were other parents of gifted children with similar problems. The counselor felt that additional parent counseling sessions were needed before a real difference could take place. The parent counselor volunteered to continue the parenting sessions.

Second Week — Counselor conducted final group counseling sessions with parents of gifted students in Administrative Area III school (School C).

The parent counselor asked the parents in attendance to discuss their concerns. The parents freely discussed problems they were having with their children especially those problems involving school activities. The parents were in agreement that often their children took the leadership role in school activities by not informing parents of special school events or discouraging parents from attending those activities. Several parents stated that their children had requested that they not attend the parent counseling sessions. The parent counselor reminded the parents that it was the parents responsibility to raise the child, not the child's responsibility to raise the parent. The counselor suggested that the parents regularly check with the school principal, counselor, and teachers regarding the progress of their child and inquire about activities on the school calendar. Parents should select the school activities they wish to attend and not be influenced by their children. The parents left the meeting pleased that they had the opportunity to share in the parent counseling session.

Third Week — Provided inservice training for teaching of the gifted on administering appropriate achievement test. Teachers of the gifted from the participating schools met at the Instructional Services Center to receive inservice training on the administration of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The teachers of the gifted were familiar with the test administration procedures but the writer decided to provide the inservice training experience because a year had passed since the teachers last administered the test. The inservice training was conducted by a research assistant from the Department of Research and Evaluation.

Fourth Week — The writer disseminated Locally Funded Gifted Education Tracking Forms to appropriate personnel for March reporting period. A cover letter including directions for completing the form and the date for completion were mailed to the teachers of the gifted at the participating schools.

7. March

First Week — Standardized achievement and psychological tests were administered to students. Teachers of the gifted administered the Iowa

Test of Basic Skills to the gifted students the first two days of the week. The teachers hand scored the tests on the third and fourth days of the same week.

The writer arranged with the Coordinator of Psychological Services in the Area I Office to have a psychologist assigned to the practicum project. The psychologist's responsibility to the project was to administer the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (group intelligence test) to all of the students in the participating schools and to report the findings to the participating teachers. The psychologist administered the test to the gifted students in Administrative Area I on the third day of the week, Area II on the fourth day of the week, and Area III on the fifth day of the week. All of the tests were administered during the morning and hand scored by the psychologist during the afternoon. The psychologist reported the results to the participating teachers the following Monday.

Second Week

Locally Funded Gifted Education Tracking Forms were mailed to the writer by teachers of the gifted. The writer received

the Locally Funded Gifted Education Tracking Forms from each participating teacher. The writer reviewed and analyzed the data. Writer consulted with counselors regarding their assessment of the project. The counselors were pleased to have participated in the project and found it both rewarding and enlightening. The counselors also felt that the experience was beneficial to both the students and parents. The counselors felt that counseling for gifted students and parents of the gifted should become a standard part of the curriculum for gifted education. A composite summary of the counselors impressions of the practicum are found in Appendix C.

Third Week — The writer computed and analyzed data and evaluated the practicum with assistance from appropriate personnel.

8. April

First Week — Final Report of the practicum was submitted to Practicum Advisor, the Director of the Program for Exceptional Children and Practicum Observers.

Functions Participant Undertook

The major responsibilities of the writer in this practicum were to coordinate the project and to communicate with the teachers of the gifted, selected principals, counselors and Subject Area Coordinators regarding the activities in this practicum.

The writer coordinated the entire practicum project. The writer was responsible for developing the contracts for counselors, and the course descriptions for the counselors. The writer provided curricula for the teacher inservice training sessions. The writer was responsible for securing materials to be taught in the educational skills development component of the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program. The writer also sought and encouraged input and involvement in decision making. The writer monitored progress of the program.

Monitoring The Action

The implementation process was evaluated at critical points: first, second, and third weeks in November; December 15; and early March in the implementation design. At those critical points the questions asked were "To what extent can specific interventions in the locally funded gifted program effect reductions in discrepancies between expected and actual performances of gifted students?" and "To what extent can specific interventions in the state funded gifted program reduce instances in which there are discrepancies between expected and actual performance of gifted students?" In instances in which the answer to one or both questions was in the negative, steps

were taken to effect mid-course corrections. An example of a mid course correction was assuring teachers in the locally funded gifted program that the outcome of the practicum would not negatively affect their status as teachers of the gifted.

Rationale for the Implementation Design

The rationale undergirding the implementation plan evolved from the two questions posed above (see Monitoring the Action).

The Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program reflected a combination of two successful approaches found in the literature. As indicated, the program included an investment in counseling students and their parents while the educational skills building elements included: 1) the individualization and personalization of the teaching-learning process; 2) the enhancement of the pupil-teacher partnership in learning; 3) the support of a responsive peer group; 4) and an atmosphere to express, experiment, and explore without threat of failure or rejection. Parents made a significant contribution to the program through their participation in the group counseling sessions. It was hoped that the combination of these strategies would prove successful in recovering some and preventing the loss of others of our high ability students.

CHAPTER 6

MEASURING OUTCOMES: IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION AND SIDE EFFECTS

Evaluation of Objectives

Assessment of the practicum outcomes and evaluation of the relative success of the processes and procedures employed were the major administrative activities undertaken by the writer. The evaluation design of the practicum was structured to assess the terminal objectives as stated in Chapter 3. Various means of measurement were utilized in support of the assessment. These included use of standardized test scores and outcomes of student and parent counseling.

The evaluation as summarized is based upon the measurement of success of the terminal objectives. An ongoing formative evaluation took place throughout the implementation of the practicum.

Listed below are the two terminal objectives from Chapter 3. Following both objective statements is a discussion of data gathered, the measurement device used and activities designed to assess achievement of or failure to attain the specific objectives.

Terminal Objective 1

During the period September 2, 1986 through March 2, 1987, underachieving gifted students enrolled in the locally funded gifted program on September 2, 1986 and their parent(s) will participate in

a Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program. As a result of participation in this program 50 percent of the underachieving gifted currently enrolled in the locally funded gifted program achieved at expected levels and were readmitted into the state funded program on March 2, 1987. Evidence that this has occurred took the form of the Locally Funded Gifted Tracking Forms which was submitted to the writer on March 16, 1987.

Outcome and Discussion

Locally Funded Gifted Education Tracking Forms were submitted to the writer on March 16. It was found that 110 of the 150 students had met the state eligibility achievement criterion and were, therefore, reenrolled in the state funded gifted program. It should be pointed out that the 150 students were also required to demonstrate that they met the state eligibility I.Q. criterion. One hundred fourteen of the 150 students did so. Thus four students who met the I.Q. criterion could not be moved to the state funded gifted program because they did not meet the achievement criterion. Because at least 75 students were moved to the state funded gifted program this objective was attained.

Terminal Objective 2

During the period September 2, 1986 through March 2, 1987, high risk gifted students enrolled in the state funded gifted program will participate in a Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program. As a result of being exposed to this program, less than ten percent of the gifted students enrolled in the state funded program for the

gifted in the participating schools will be terminated from the state program and placed in the locally funded gifted program. Evidence that this has occurred took the form of the Locally Funded Gifted Program Tracking Form which was submitted on March 16, 1987.

Outcome and Discussion

Locally Funded Gifted Education Tracking Forms were submitted to the writer on March 16. It was found that one of the 180 students enrolled in the state funded program for the gifted in the participating schools was terminated from the state program and placed in the locally funded gifted program. Since less than ten percent (less than 18) of the gifted students enrolled in the state funded program for the gifted in the participating schools was terminated, this second objective was attained.

Pre and Post Comparison

These findings are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Numbers and Percentages of Students Assigned to Locally Funded and State Funded Gifted Programs Before vs After Practicum Implementation

	TYPE PROGRAM					
	Locally Funded Student		State Funded Student		Totals	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Before Practicum	150	46	180	55	330	101
After Practicum	41	12	289	88	330	100

It may be seen from Table 1 that almost half of the 330 students assigned to the gifted programs in the participating middle schools were enrolled in the locally funded gifted program. Subsequent to practicum implementation only 12 percent of those students were moved to the state funded program out of the locally funded gifted program.

Side Effects

Several side effects were experienced as a result of carrying out the practicum. One anticipated and positive side effect was that the Superintendent of schools will consider using the practicum approach with bright students judged by their teachers to be gifted but who do not meet state eligibility requirements.

There were several unanticipated side effects. One effect on the positive side was that a counselor volunteered to continue to provide counseling sessions for parents. A second positive and unanticipated side effect was that the assistant principal in one of the participating schools took a list of student concerns and grievances to the school's administrative council for information and action. The list was generated by students during a counseling session in which the assistant principal sat without invitation.

Some negative and unanticipated side effects were also experienced. These include apparent teacher concerns about job security. These concerns may have been raised because 79% of the students enrolled in the locally funded gifted program were reenrolled in the state funded gifted program. The teachers were assured that they would continue in the local or state gifted education program where needed. Teacher insecurity was also evidenced when they were

directed to notify parents that their children were to be reevaluated by a psychologist. Reticence to write and forward the letters was observed and the writer was requested to do it for them. Unfortunately, some teachers indicated a perception that low student scores would reflect on their teaching ability.

Additional negative and unanticipated side effects experienced included the beliefs held by some that teacher behavior may contribute to underachievement and that students were malingering (on tests) in order to avoid "hard" classes to which gifted students were assigned (in order to maintain "A" averages).

A final negative and unanticipated side effect experienced was that counseling services voluntarily provided to students during the practicum were no longer being provided. This is unfortunate. The counselor believes that these services continue to be needed. However, he believes that counseling services should be an integral part of the gifted education curriculum.

Management Effectiveness

Of course many people contributed to the success of the practicum. Particular contributions made by the writer involved planning and execution.

Some contributions made in the area of planning included the involvement of others, identifying and procuring materials, personnel and transportation and ordering actions taken logically and appropriately. Contributions made in the area of executing the plan include communicating, trouble shooting, facilitating and assisting (Appendix C: 92).

The practicum was carried out smoothly. Few, if any, problems were encountered. The unfortunate circumstances that led to the unavailability of students in one school did require that the writer modify her plan. Adjustments made in the plan did not distort the purpose of the practicum.

Chapter 7

MAINTAINING AND MODIFYING THE PRACTICUM APPROACH

Aspects of the practicum are in the process of being incorporated into the local and state funded gifted programs in the participating schools. These include materials, parental counseling and curriculum modifications. The approach can be implemented with ease. It requires few additional resources (such as the limited counseling services that were provided).

Follow-up Activities

The fact that the objectives of this practicum were more than met increases the probability that the superintendent will use this approach with bright students judged by their teachers to be gifted but who do not meet state criteria. Other possible follow-up activities include using the approach in the local and state funded gifted programs in the schools that did not participate in the implementation of this practicum, expanding the program to state funded gifted programs in the other six middle schools, extending the program down to state funded gifted programs in elementary schools addressing the insecurities of teachers in the locally funded gifted programs, and making efforts to reduce instances in which students malinger.

Dissemination

The writer plans to involve herself in four dissemination activities in the foreseeable future. One activity involves the

interest communicated by the DeKalb County Public School System's Program for the Gifted desire to use this practicum model to apply for state funding for its program for the gifted from the Georgia Quality Basic Education Program special grants component. A second activity will involve sharing aspects of the practicum at state and national conferences for the gifted. The writer also plans to submit articles about the practicum to professional journals. Finally, the writer will continue to share information about the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program through orientation programs for parents, teachers, and the public, through district and building level meetings and through responses to inquiries.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As a result of implementing this practicum, the writer has concluded that it is possible to modify the educational programs of gifted students in such a way that those students will perform at expected levels on standardized tests. The writer also concluded that parents can be helped to play meaningful roles in the education of their children. A third conclusion arrived at by the writer is that many gifted students are inappropriately placed because they are not achieving at expected levels and there has not been an appropriate intervention into that behavior.

The writer recommends that other practitioners who seek to address the problem of underachieving gifted students by using the Student Centered Teaching and Counseling Program be aware of and compensate for the negative side effects that are discussed above.

The writer also recommends more frequent counseling sessions for students and that a greater effort be made to involve as many parents as possible in the parent counseling sessions. Finally, the writer recommends that every effort be made to effect the appropriate placement of gifted students.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 1

Teacher: A

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003182410		X	
2.	003412208		X	
3.	003409594		X	
4.	003614740		X	
5.	003424329		X	
6.	003554679		X	
7.	003591315		X	
8.	003376664		X	
9.	003352512		X	
10.	003623452		X	
11.	003591407		X	
12.	003400695		X	
13.	003433615		X	
14.	003424446		X	
15.	003502260		X	
16.	003433319		X	
17.	003591440		X	
18.	003424433		X	
19.	003540068		X	
20.	003395102		X	
21.	003573659		X	
22.	003205145		X	
23.	003594072		X	
24.	003205416		X	
25.	003250698		X	

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

(2)

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 1

Teacher: A

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003392776		Yes	
2.	003392701		"	
3.	003304617		"	
4.	003466013		"	
5.	003559021		"	
6.	003561578		"	
7.	003256756		"	
8.	003216985		"	
9.	003502294		"	
10.	003510294		"	
11.	003561622		"	
12.	003189109		"	
13.	003521368		"	
14.	003451281		"	
15.	003469281		"	
16.	003250572		"	
17.	003310108		"	
18.	003233615		"	
19.	003233619		"	
20.	003257372		"	
21.	003275122		"	
22.	003392633		"	
23.	003451282		"	
24.	003304552		"	
25.	003427997		"	

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

75

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 2 _____

Teacher: B _____

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003331832		X	
2.	003510282		X	
3.	003331765		X	
4.	003331698		X	
5.	003510483		X	
6.	003487651		X	
7.	003302396		X	
8.	003295739		X	
9.	003631410		X	
10.	003331835		X	
11.	003302378		X	
12.	003331747		X	
13.	003331839		X	
14.	003510410		X	
15.	003404469		X	
16.	003331326		X	
17.	003631322		X	
18.	003631317		X	
19.	003487563		X	
20.	003487555		X	
21.	003196385		X	
22.	003296136		X	
23.	003196388		X	
24.	003331328		X	
25.	003331754		X	

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

76

(2)

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 2

Teacher: B

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003424538		X	
2.	003574028		X	
3.	003424366		X	
4.	003409633		X	
5.	003573634		X	
6.	003412198		X	
7.	003395037		X	
8.	003595037		X	
9.	003592123		X	
10.	003412324		X	
11.	003096577		X	
12.	003424596		X	
13.	003591575		X	
14.	003362116		X	
15.	003580250		X	
16.	003424333		X	
17.	003096560		X	
18.	003409638		X	
19.	003540856		X	
20.	003412186		X	
21.	003591890		X	
22.	003424348		X	
23.	003412779		X	
24.	003638025		X	
25.	003416369		X	

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 3
Teacher: C

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003637015		Yes	
2.	003582760		"	
3.	003623158		"	
4.	003554678		"	
5.	003233764		"	
6.	003424435		"	
7.	003583002		"	
8.	003582796		"	
9.	003412245		"	
10.	003404248		"	
11.	003625476		"	
12.	003554803		"	
13.	003392753		"	
14.	003392678		"	
15.	003625426		"	
16.	003392502		"	
17.	003392516		"	
18.	003554804		"	
19.	003272067		"	
20.	003554911		"	
21.	003404471		"	
22.	003544148		"	
23.	003521330		"	
24.	003591325		"	
25.	003433330		"	

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

78

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 1

Teacher: D

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003379724	X		
2.	003409792	X		
3.	003202279	X		
4.	003588760	X		
5.	003395063	X		
6.	003395034	X		
7.	003409776	X		
8.	003588255	X		
9.	003362134	X		
10.	003362132	X		
11.	003182439	X		
12.	003433594	X		
13.	003544113	X		
14.	003588775	X		
15.	003573957	X		
16.	003617203	X		
17.	003424349	X		
18.	003580255	X		
19.	003395055	X		
20.	003379758	X		
21.	003205573	X		
22.	003395024	X		
23.	003395013	X		
24.	003590284	X		
25.	003451397	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

79

(2)

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 1

Teacher: D

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1. 003395053	X		
2. 003588830	X		
3. 003395136	X		
4. 003536821	X		
5. 003431090	X		
6. 003588790	X		
7. 003456472	X		
8. 003431211	X		
9. 003395081	X		
10. 003549147	X		
11. 003395040	X		
12. 003594094	X		
13. 003589404	X		
14. 003395011	X		
15. 003395035	X		
16. 003362276	X		
17. 003379684	X		
18. 003395026	X		
19. 003577078	X		
20. 003588764	X		
21. 003401171	X		
22. 003211742	X		
23. 003319038	X		
24. 003392350	X		
25. 003371732	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

(3)

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 3 Middle

Teacher: D

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1. 003424361		X	
2. 003096605		X	
3. 003544177		X	
4. 003182630		X	
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
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23.			
24.			
25.			

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM 81

(2)

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 3 Middle

Teacher: C

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003331967		X	
2.	003631307		X	
3.	003487459		X	
4.	003487929		X	
5.	003302501		X	
6.	003530535		X	
7.	003631386		X	
8.	003168988		X	
9.	003331334		X	
10.	003511063		X	
11.	003302386		X	
12.	003331403		X	
13.	003331338		X	
14.	003302566		X	
15.	003302367		X	
16.	003331822		X	
17.	003631401		X	
18.	003302352		X	
19.	003614754		X	
20.	003523899		X	
21.	003614763		X	
22.	003193632		X	
23.				
24.				
25.				

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

82

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 2

Teacher: E

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003465966	X		
2.	003548713	X		
3.	003603136	X		
4.	003361960	X		
5.	003587980	X		
6.	003202144	X		
7.	003167786	X		
8.	003154571	X		
9.	003495170	X		
10.	003603236	X		
11.	003409530	X		
12.	003603309	X		
13.	003587940	X		
14.	003371914	X		
15.	003589125	X		
16.	003412146	X		
17.	003548549	X		
18.	003379666	X		
19.	003551502	X		
20.	003319022	X		
21.	003587876	X		
22.	003392227	X		
23.	003588135	X		
24.	003430937	X		
25.	003392062	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

83

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 2 [redacted]

Teacher: E

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003590767	X		
2.	003554590	X		
3.	003587905	X		
4.	003189009	X		
5.	003341426	X		
6.	003603087	X		
7.	003603338	X		
8.	003202153	X		
9.	003590773	X		
10.	003319002	X		
11.	003204968	X		
12.	003590205	X		
13.	003543825	X		
14.	003404090	X		
15.	003602387	X		
16.	003233329	X		
17.	003554599	X		
18.	003548712	X		
19.	003400374	X		
20.	003319036	X		
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

84

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 3 Middle

Teacher: F

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003304569	X		
2.	003352292	X		
3.	003359407	X		
4.	003352294	X		
5.	003341096	X		
6.	003295788	X		
7.	003352415	X		
8.	003341098	X		
9.	003283797	X		
10.	003319506	X		
11.	003283993	X		
12.	003359046	X		
13.	003341218	X		
14.	003611788	X		
15.	003325417	X		
16.	003283799	X		
17.	003284093	X		
18.	003359244	X		
19.	003649169	X		
20.	003352444	X		
21.	003594462	X		
22.	003352297	X		
23.	003352299	X		
24.	003319271	X		
25.	003588236	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 3

Teacher: F

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003295576	X		
2.	003295578	X		
3.	003319262	X		
4.	003352500	X		
5.	003637002	X		
6.	003295892	X		
7.	003490843	X		
8.	00349052	X		
9.	003283815	X		
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
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GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 3

Teacher: G

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003295954	X		
2.	003383828	X		
3.	003352994	X		
4.	003352995	X		
5.	003295931	X		
6.	003359156	X		
7.	003341823	X		
8.	003283807	X		
9.	003341115	X		
10.	003359055	X		
11.	003352479	X		
12.	003295759	X		
13.	003283677	X		
14.	003295571	X		
15.	003341770	X		
16.	003501819	X		
17.	003359403	X		
18.	003296112	X		
19.	003359232	X		
20.	003319385	X		
21.	003359220	X		
22.	003341231	X		
23.	003331689	X		
24.	003283681	X		
25.	003259231	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

(2)

87

December X
March ____
June ____

School: 3

Teacher: G

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003352472	X		
2.	003319389	X		
3.	003302366	X		
4.	003295562	X		
5.	003341588	X		
6.	003352606	X		
7.	003319307	X		
8.	003352505	X		
9.	003295742	X		
10.	003352393	X		
11.	003352307	X		
12.	003226296	X		
13.	003341544	X		
14.	003359236	X		
15.	003359162	X		
16.	003283660	X		
17.	003326130	X		
18.	003352430	X		
19.	003295565	X		
20.	003319418	X		
21.	003283804	X		
22.	003295566	X		
23.	003409714	X		
24.	003295567	X		
25.	003295982	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

88

December
March X
June

School: 1

Teacher: A

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003182410	X		
2.	003412208	X		
3.	003409594	X		
4.	003614740	X		
5.	003424329	X		
6.	003554679	X		
7.	003591315		X	
8.	003376664	X		
9.	003352512	X		
10.	003623452		X	
11.	003591407	X		
12.	003400695	X		
13.	003433615		X	
14.	003424446		X	
15.	003502260	X		
16.	003433319	X		
17.	003591440	X		
18.	003424433	X		
19.	003540068	X		
20.	003395102	X		
21.	003573659	X		
22.	003205145		X	
23.	003594072	X		
24.	003205416		X	
25.	003250698	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

(2)

89

December ___
March X
June ___

School: 1

Teacher: A

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003392776	X		
2.	003392701		X	
3.	003304617	X		
4.	003466013		X	
5.	003559021	X		
6.	003561578	X		
7.	003256756	X		
8.	003216985	X		
9.	003502294		X	
10.	003510294	X		
11.	003561622		X	
12.	003189109	X		
13.	003521368	X		
14.	003451281	X		
15.	003469281	X		
16.	003250572	X		
17.	003310108	X		
18.	003233615		X	
19.	003233619	X		
20.	003257372	X		
21.	003275122		X	
22.	003392633	X		
23.	003451282	X		
24.	003304552		X	
25.	003427997	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

90

December ____
March X
June ____

School: ____ 2 ____

Teacher: B

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003331832		X	
2.	003510282	X		
3.	003331765	X		
4.	003331698	X		
5.	003510483	X		
6.	003487651	X		
7.	003302396		X	
8.	003295739		X	
9.	003631410	X		
10.	003331835	X		
11.	003302378	X		
12.	003331747	X		
13.	003331839	X		
14.	003510410	X		
15.	003404469		X	
16.	003331326	X		
17.	003631322	X		
18.	003631317	X		
19.	003487563	X		
20.	003487555		X	
21.	003196385	X		
22.	003296136	X		
23.	003196388	X		
24.	003331328	X		
25.	003331754		X	

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

(2) 91

December
March X
June

School: 2.
Teacher: B

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003424538		X	
2.	003574028		X	
3.	003424366		X	
4.	003409633	X		
5.	003573634	X		
6.	003412198		X	
7.	003395037	X		
8.	003595037		X	
9.	003592123		X	
10.	003412324	X		
11.	003096577		X	
12.	003424596	X		
13.	003591575	X		
14.	003362116	X		
15.	003580250		X	
16.	003424333	X		
17.	003096560	X		
18.	003409638	X		
19.	003540856		X	
20.	003412186		X	
21.	003591890	X		
22.	003424348	X		
23.	003412779		X	
24.	003638025		X	
25.	003416369		X	

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

22

December
March X
June

School: 3

Teacher: C

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003637015	X		
2.	003582760	X		
3.	003623158	X		
4.	003554678		X	
5.	003233764	X		
6.	003424435	X		
7.	003583002	X		
8.	003582796		X	
9.	003412245	X		
10.	003404248	X		
11.	003625476		X	
12.	003554803	X		
13.	003392753	X		
14.	003392678	X		
15.	003625426	X		
16.	003392502		X	
17.	003392516	X		
18.	003554804	X		
19.	003272067		X	
20.	003554911	X		
21.	003404471	X		
22.	003544148	X		
23.	003521330	X		
24.	003591325	X		
25.	003433330	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

(2)

93

December
March X
June

School: 3

Teacher: C

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003331967	X		
2.	003631307	X		
3.	003487459	X		
4.	003487929	X		
5.	003302501		X	
6.	003530535	X		
7.	003631386	X		
8.	003168988	X		
9.	003331334	X		
10.	003511063	X		
11.	003302386	X		
12.	003331403	X		
13.	003331338	X		
14.	003302566	X		
15.	003302367			
16.	003331822	X		
17.	003631401	X		
18.	003302352		X	
19.	003614754	X		
20.	003523899	X		
21.	003614763		X	
22.	003193632		X	
23.				
24.				
25.				

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

94

December ___
March X
June ___

School: 1

Teacher: D

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003379724	X		
2.	003409792	X		
3.	003202279	X		
4.	003588760	X		
5.	003395063	X		
6.	003395034	X		
7.	003409776	X		
8.	003588255	X		
9.	003362134	X		
10.	003362132	X		
11.	003182439	X		
12.	003433594	X		
13.	003544113	X		
14.	003588775	X		
15.	003573957	X		
16.	003617203	X		
17.	003424349	X		
18.	003580255	X		
19.	003395055	X		
20.	003379758	X		
21.	003205573	X		
22.	003395024	X		
23.	003395013	X		
24.	003590284	X		
25.	003451397	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

(2)

December
March X
June

School: 1

Teacher: D

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1. 003395053	X		
2. 003588830	X		
3. 003395136	X		
4. 003536821	X		
5. 003431090		X	
6. 003588790	X		
7. 003456472	X		
8. 003431211	X		
9. 003395081	X		
10. 003549147	X		
11. 003395040	X		
12. 003594094	X		
13. 003589404	X		
14. 003395011	X		
15. 003395035	X		
16. 003362276	X		
17. 003379684	X		
18. 003395026	X		
19. 003577078	X		
20. 003588764	X		
21. 003401171	X		
22. 003211742	X		
23. 003319038	X		
24. 003392350	X		
25. 003371732	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

96

(3)

December ____
March X
June ____

School: 3

Teacher: D

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003424361		X	
2.	003096605	X		
3.	003544177		X	
4.			X	
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

97

December
March X
June

School: 1

Teacher: E

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003465966	X		
2.	003548713	X		
3.	003603136	X		
4.	003361960	X		
5.	003587980	X		
6.	003202144	X		
7.	003167786	X		
8.	003154571	X		
9.	003495170	X		
10.	003603236	X		
11.	003409530	X		
12.	003603309	X		
13.	003587940	X		
14.	003371914	X		
15.	003589125	X		
16.	003412146	X		
17.	003548549	X		
18.	003379666	X		
19.	003551502	X		
20.	003319022	X		
21.	003587876	X		
22.	003392227	X		
23.	003588135	X		
24.	003430937	X		
25.	003392062	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

98
December
March X
June

School: 2

Teacher: E

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003590767	X		
2.	003554590	X		
3.	003587905	X		
4.	003189009	X		
5.	003341426	X		
6.	003603087	X		
7.	003603338	X		
8.	003202153	X		
9.	003590773	X		
10.	003319002	X		
11.	003204968	X		
12.	003590205	X		
13.	003543825	X		
14.	003404090	X		
15.	003602387	X		
16.	003233329	X		
17.	003554599	X		
18.	003548712	X		
19.	003400374	X		
20.	003319036	X		
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

December 99
March X
June ____

School: 3
Teacher: F

Name (I.D. Numbers Only)		State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003304569	X		
2.	003352292	X		
3.	003359407	X		
4.	003352294	X		
5.	003341096	X		
6.	003295788	X		
7.	003352415	X		
8.	003341098	X		
9.	003283797	X		
10.	003319506	X		
11.	003283993	X		
12.	003359046	X		
13.	003341218	X		
14.	003611788	X		
15.	003325417	X		
16.	003283799	X		
17.	003284093	X		
18.	003359244	X		
19.	003649169	X		
20.	003352444	X		
21.	003594462	X		
22.	003352297	X		
23.	003352299	X		
24.	003319271	X		
25.	003588236	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

100

December ____
March X
June ____

School: 3

Teacher: F

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003295576	X		
2.	003295578	X		
3.	003319262	X		
4.	003352500	X		
5.	003637002	X		
6.	003295892	X		
7.	003490843	X		
8.	00349052	X		
9.	003283815	X		
10.				
11.				
12.				
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24.				
25.				

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

101

December
March X
June

School: 3

Teacher: G

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003295954	X		
2.	003383828	X		
3.	003352994	X		
4.	003352995	X		
5.	003295931	X		
6.	003359156	X		
7.	003341823	X		
8.	003283807	X		
9.	003341115	X		
10.	003359055	X		
11.	003352479	X		
12.	003295759	X		
13.	003283677	X		
14.	003295571	X		
15.	003341770	X		
16.	003501819	X		
17.	003359403	X		
18.	003296112	X		
19.	003359232	X		
20.	003319385	X		
21.	003359220	X		
22.	003341231	X		
23.	003331689	X		
24.	003283681	X		
25.	003259231	X		

GIFTED STUDENT TRACKING FORM

(2)

102

December ___
March X
June ___

School: 3
Teacher: G

	Name (I.D. Numbers Only)	State Program	Local Program	Moved To
1.	003352472	X		
2.	003319389	X		
3.	003302366	X		
4.	003295562	X		
5.	003341588	X		
6.	003352606	X		
7.	003319307	X		
8.	003352505	X		
9.	003295742	X		
10.	003352393	X		
11.	003352307	X		
12.	003226296	X		
13.	003341544	X		
14.	003359236	X		
15.	003359162	X		
16.	003283660	X		
17.	003326130	X		
18.	003352430	X		
19.	003295565	X		
20.	003319418	X		
21.	003283804	X		
22.	003295566	X		
23.	003409714	X		
24.	003295567	X		
25.	003295982	X		

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

Critical Thinking

Thinker Tasks: Critical Thinking Activities was the primary series selected to improve critical thinking in this practicum. The books in this series are intended to enrich and extend the problem solving, critical-thinking skills of gifted students with a variety of challenging activities. The series incorporates different types of thinking skills. One of the most important features in the series is the sequencing of each problem type. Many problem solving activities provide great problems, but they are often just a collection of different problems. When the student can work through a series of problems such as those found in Thinker Tasks, thinking skills can be reinforced and extended. Students are encouraged to look for solution patterns, techniques, and methods as they solve each group of problems. The teacher encourages the students to discuss these techniques and ask how they might use their methods in a different setting.

Thinker Tasks: Critical Thinking Activities is a series of three books. In Book 1: Attributes and Logic, students must use attributes and logic to solve such problems as putting characters in the current order, determining which items belong to a group, and solving analogy-type problems.

In Book 2: Number Patterns, the problems usually involve operations with numbers, but thinking critically provides helpful

patterns for finding solutions. The students are encouraged to use organized recording methods and a knowledge of number properties to solve the problems.

In Book 3: Visual Perception, the problems are quite different, emphasizing visual and perceptual ability. Students are asked to look carefully for similarities and differences. They must try to manipulate an object mentally, folding and unfolding, or looking at it from all sides.

Language Arts

Challenge U: The English College was the primary language arts series used in this practicum. This program is a diagnostic tool enabling the teacher to identify the level of instruction needed by each student in the class. It is especially designed to help underachieving gifted students realize exactly which language usage and mechanics skills they have mastered and which ones they have not, and to rouse in them the need to master those skills. It lets both the teacher and students know when it is time for the latter to move on to more complex materials. The students grade their own work, except for the examinations. Students who are capable of working at higher levels proceed, which allows the teacher of the gifted time to address individual needs of other students which have been identified.

Mathematics

Challenge U: The Math College is a mathematics enrichment program designed for gifted students. This series was the primary instructional unit used to improve and enhance mathematic skills. This program, with its freshman through senior levels, is a diagnostic tool which enables the teacher to identify the level of instruction needed by each student in the class. It is especially designed to help gifted students realize exactly which basic operations they have mastered and which they have not. It lets both the teacher and student knows when it is time for the latter to move on to more complex material. The students grades their own work except for the examinations. While students capable of working at higher levels proceed, the teacher of the gifted is free to address individual needs which have been identified. Students who complete the program with ease will have completed a comprehensive review of basic skills with a minimum of effort and repetition.

Test Taking Skills

The Scope Visual 25 series for Improving Test Scores was the primary instructional tool used to improve test taking techniques. The Scope Visual 25 is intended to help students develop more efficient test taking strategies and to make students more comfortable in testing situations by introducing them to a variety of "test-attack" skills.

Underachieving gifted students often experience a high degree of anxiety in test situations. This, coupled with a prior sense of failure, inevitably leads to poor performance. The result is that test-taking often becomes meaningless to these students, and their desire to do well on test decreases as the expectations of the teachers and schools increase. For this reason, The Scope Visual 25 series for Improving Test Scores was used. It uses a series of transparencies which encourage students to "meet the test" with confidence by building skill in the kind of exercises that most often appear on standardized tests. The transparencies reinforce the following test-taking skills: vocabulary, reading, logical thinking, spelling, usage, capitalization, punctuation, reference, and map skills. The follow-up activities are intended to supplement transparencies with suggestions the teacher of the gifted would incorporate into their own program.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Summary of Parent Counseling Sessions

The writer attended each parent counseling sessions. At the completion of the sessions the writer asked the counselor to summarize the sessions. In summary the counselor felt that the overall parent attendance was low. In his opinion the low attendance was due to parents either being unmotivated or too busy. However, he felt that the parents who did attend the sessions were extremely interested and wanted to gain additional information concerning strategies for working with gifted students.

According to the counselor a recurring theme during the discussion with parents was the fact that parents perceived their children as bright young people who often disagree with them on issues. The parents admitted they often didn't take control of those situations; this added to their child taking the leadership role--be it right or wrong. The counselor made the following recommendation regarding future parent counseling sessions: 1) Parents should be surveyed to see what time is most convenient for parents, 2) The counselor would be willing to conduct the parent counseling sessions in the evening if that is desired of the parents, and 3) The counseling sessions should be continued next school year. Overall the counselor felt that the sessions were worthwhile and that the parents addressed "down to earth" concerns. Each parent was given a sheet of tips to use with underachieving gifted students (Appendix D: 94).

Summary of Student Counseling Sessions

The writer was in attendance at several of the student counseling sessions. At the completion of the counseling sessions the writer asked the counselor to summarize the experience. The counselor stated that the students were very bright and appeared to be extremely frustrated. He felt that the students had the impression that their teachers are not sensitive to their needs and not committed to working with them. According to the counselor the students had a sense of humor, were willing open to discuss their concerns, and to laugh at their circumstances (although it's not funny). The students questioned the competence of some of their teachers and felt that often the teachers penalized them for being bright. They often felt that they are the victims of aggression by some authority figures.

The counselor's strongest impression of the session was that if things are as bad as the students portrayed them to be, the school system is in a lot of trouble. And if the allegations of the students are valid, the school system should work to improve the quality of teachers who are responsible for working with bright students. The counselor recommended that counseling sessions become a permanent part of the curriculum for all bright students. Each student was given a copy of the Student Inventory Form which was developed by the student counselor (Appendix E:1$\frac{1}{4}$) to assist them with self appraisal.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

TIPS FOR PARENTING GIFTED CHILDREN

Parents are a primary force in fostering children's growth and creative development. Parents are their children's first teachers and have the greatest and most lasting impact on their lives. While schools provide the sequential development of skills, parents offer values, shapes attitudes and dispense information. Here are some suggestions for parents to use to help their children attain their potential:

1. Parents should help their children learn how to think by talking to them a lot, encouraging them to ask questions.

2. Provide an atmosphere of respect for knowledge and learning (make available books, take children to the library, monitor television programs).

3. Provide for children's participation in outside activities (dance, swimming, instrument lessons, etc.).

4. Realize your child's uniqueness. A child should not be expected to be gifted in everything (praise individual accomplishments, don't compare your child with siblings or peers).

5. Don't be afraid to admit you don't have all answers. Tell your child, "Let's explore this together."

6. Don't be intimidated by your child's giftedness. A gifted child is a child first and still needs you to set limitations.

7. There is a fine line between encouragement and pushing. The child should be allowed to develop at his/her own rate, so follow the lead of the child's interests. (The child does not have to be reading before entering school).

8. Parents should make time to share their children's interests with them on a one-to-one basis.

9. Allow ample time for thinking and daydreaming.

10. Don't exploit your child's gifts by overpraising, calling attention to your child's intellectual superiority, or discussing the child's accomplishments in her/his presence. The child should not be put in a position where he is compelled to play the role of the child prodigy.

11. Seek help from professionals (teacher of the gifted, or coordinator) knowledgeable in the nature of giftedness. There are many excellent books available for your reference.

12. Explore and take advantage of community resources (museums, local historic sites, zoo, galleries, theater, concerts).

13. Expose you child to quality literature and music.

14. Serve as a model for your child (let him/her see you reading, speaking properly being an active inquirer about your world).

15. Don't oversaturate your child with too many commerical educational materials and toys. Let the child use his/her imagination. Provide paper, paints, materials scraps, clay and scissors, etc.

16. Know your child's teachers. Exchange information. Volunteer your time and services.

17. Remember, you're not alone. Get together with other parents of gifted to share feelings.

18. Remember, parents of gifted children are people, too. Almost certainly, what you have been doing up until now has probably been just fine. Enjoy your child!

For further information contact:

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